

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Horry County Courthouse

Other names/site number: Third Avenue Courthouse

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 1201 Third Avenue

City or town: Conway State: SC 29 County: 051

Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B X C D

<hr/>	
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<hr/>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	
<hr/>	
In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<hr/>	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
<hr/>	
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☐

Public – Local

☒

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

☒

District

☐

Site

☐

Structure

☐

Object

☐

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u>2</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Government/courthouse

Government/government office

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Government/courthouse

Government/government office

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals/Classical Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation: Brick, Walls: Brick, Roof: Asphalt

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Horry County Courthouse was constructed in 1908 in Conway, South Carolina, and sits within the block bounded by Second and Third avenues to the south and north, and Elm and Beatty streets to the east and west. The building is an excellent example of the Neoclassical Revival style. The center of the building is the original two-story brick building, with a front portico supported by Ionic columns, topped by a balustrade. A small speaking balcony sits over the double door main entrance under the portico. The plan features a cross-hall layout with clerestory windows around the higher walls of the center section of the building. The center is capped with an eight-sided cupola. In 1938, the building expanded with an addition to the south side and a second addition in 1964 added wings to the east and west sides. Landscaping on the three-acre site includes live oaks and other large trees along with dense foundation plantings. The grounds feature several historical markers and memorials added over the years. The property has been in continuous use for over 100 years and remains in good condition. The exterior retains its historic integrity from the period of significance, with all additions matching the initial structure in scale, style, and materials.

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Narrative Description

Site

The Horry County Courthouse is located at 1201 Third Avenue in downtown Conway, South Carolina. It is situated on 3.12 acres planted with trees and flowering shrubs. With the majority of the surrounding buildings facing the courthouse, the grounds resemble a town square. In addition to the stately trees, the front grounds contain numerous markers and memorials, including the Vietnam Memorial, the Armed Forces Memorial, the 9/11 memorial, a Blue Star Memorial Highway sign recognizing the armed forces, and a South Carolina state historical marker. Various other small memorials also dot the landscape around the courthouse. Concrete sidewalks on three sides of the courthouse lead directly to entrances. The east entrance has two sidewalks leading directly up to each side of the entrance, connecting to a walkway that surrounds the courthouse. There are additional connections to this walkway from various points around the parcel. The outer edge of the parcel has a continuous concrete sidewalk all the way around the block.

Courthouse (1903, 1938, 1964) – Contributing Building

Exterior

The exterior of the 1908 section of the building is red pressed brick with red mortar. The north facade (primary) of the original structure is symmetrically composed, dominated by a portico with a full-width set of granite steps with cheek walls, black iron railings, and four imposing Ionic columns and capitals typical of the Neoclassical Revival style. The columns support an entablature and a balustrade of four paneled square piers and a patterned rail design featuring a standard cross overlaid by a diagonal cross. White lettering on the red brick frieze added in 1964 reads, "Horry County Court House."¹ Centered on the porch is a double-leaf entrance with a transom window divided vertically in the middle. The door surround has a simple crosshead and red brick pilasters with white capitals and bases. Red brick pilasters also edge the portico, paired with white Ionic capitals and bases. Halfway up these pilasters is an architectural applique with a triangular pattern. Directly above the door is a balcony over a dentil molding, with double-cross patterned rails between paneled posts in a scaled down version of the roof balustrade. The underside of the balcony and the ceiling of the portico are coffered. A single-leaf door leads out to the balcony. All doors on the portico have three horizontal panels on the bottom and a single lite above. There are four equal double-hung one-over-one windows, two flanking the door on the second story, and two directly below the upper windows flanking the lower doors. First and second floor windows on the front facade of the 1908 section consist of three similar windows for a total of six windows per side. All double-hung windows in the 1908 section have Bedford Limestone sills.

Above the second story is a clerestory with nine total windows, five on the front and two on each side. The clerestory windows are divided into eight triangular panes by double-cross muntins that

¹ Eva Claire Riggs, "Court House Has New Look." *Sun News*, October 15, 1964, sec. C, 5.

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match the pattern of the balustrade railings. Above these windows is a second cornice comprised of a wide band of white trim that runs around the top of the building.

The two front facades of the 1964 wings are identical to each other in all details and have single-pane double-hung one-over-one windows consisting of seven lower and seven upper-story windows matching the windows of the 1908 building. Four upper and four lower windows are in the hyphen. The fenestration on the front elevation is symmetrical. Windows sills in all additions to the courthouse have concrete sills. Both the pavilions on the primary facade have four pilasters with Ionic capitals and bases with one bay separating each pilaster. Each bay has two one-over-one windows, one on each floor. The Ionic capitals support a white entablature above. This entablature runs completely around the building, forming a lower cornice. From the red brick belt course to the bottom of the building the masonry is rusticated on all sides of the building, giving a pattern of horizontal lines encircling the entire structure with breaks for each lower floor window.

Both ends of the wings (east and west elevations) are accessed by a central double-leaf entrance with a transom window above containing a single pane and simple door surrounds. These doors match the doors on the portico with three cross panels below and a single light on the top portion. These entrances are recessed with white cased openings and have concrete steps, cheek walls and metal railings. The second story of these side facades have six one-over-one windows of the same size as the front elevation; however, they are not symmetrically placed. Three of the windows on the north side of the door have three windows directly below them on the first floor. The south side from the door has no windows on the lower level and the two windows on the second story are located towards the rear of the building. The last window on the side wing elevations is directly above the door. The east and west wing elevations mirror each other.

On the backside of the pavilions (south elevation), there are five one-over-one windows equally spaced on the second floor and no windows on the lower level. Windows match the size of those on the front elevation. On the lower story of the east side pavilion, there is a grill for venting the mechanical equipment below the second window from the west end. The vent matches the size and shape of the windows. This is the only detail that differs between the two south side elevations of the pavilions. The hyphens on the south of the side extensions each have eight equally spaced openings, four on the top floor and four on the bottom floor. On the west side hyphen, there are three windows on each floor; however, the top floor also has a grill opening on the far east side and the bottom floor a grill on the far west side. The east side hyphen has the same pattern of equally spaced openings, but only the top floor has a grill in the second from the west opening. All the other opening are windows.

The rear elevation fenestration is not symmetrical in placement on all three sides of the 1938 extension. The west elevation has six windows on the second story that are not equally spaced, and a seventh opening to the north that contains a grill. There are four first floor windows of the same size as the second story windows but placed with two at each end of the extension. The east elevation has five upper and lower windows. Three of the widows on both floors are near the main body of the courthouse and are spaced in the same manner as on the hyphen. The other four windows, placed two above and two directly below on the first floor, are closer to the opposite

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end of the extension and spaced more widely apart. On the first floor in the middle of the facade is a bricked over window opening. Originally, the end of the 1938 south elevation had symmetrically placed fenestration; however, the two lower windows west of the porch and two windows flanking the central door on the porch are bricked in. Above the central porch is a window much smaller in size than all other windows. The main feature on the rear elevation is a porch with four columns with Ionic capitals and bases like those on the north portico, but smaller in stature. These columns hold up an entablature with dentils. Added in 1964 black letters on the white frieze read: "Horry County Court House."² The hipped shed roof over this porch is metal. On the porch, the centrally located door has three panels on the lower portion and a single-lite pane above. This automated door is wider than the rest of the courthouse doors to accommodate wheelchairs. A transom window above the door is divided by diagonal cross muntins. South of the door is a side lite on the top portion and a single vertical panel below, matching the height of the panels on the door. White pilasters edge the porch, paired with white Ionic capitals and bases. Concrete steps are inset into the porch and only span the width of the two middle columns. Added in 1964 on the south side of the porch is a ramp with a nine percent slope. A second ramp with a lower grade was added later to the north side of the porch in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

An eight-sided cupola tops the hipped roof on the 1908 section. The square windows in the cupola feature the same double-cross pattern as the clerestory. The original roof was slate, however, the roofing material was changed to asphalt shingles sometime before the 1964 renovations.³ The south addition also has a hipped roof while the two side wings have hyphens with a ridge roof and two equilateral hipped roofs over the end pavilions. The 1964 roofs on the second story of the south building addition are low slope membrane material. On this portion of the roof, there is no cornice or dentils, only a white cap. The rear 1938 extension south elevation has both cornice and dentils until the hipped roof intersects the 1964 elevation.

Interior

The size of the 1908 Third Ave Courthouse building was 81' x 70' with eleven rooms in addition to the 43' x 70' main courtroom.⁴ The previous courthouse on Main Street had 5,598 square feet and the Third Avenue Courthouse doubled the size with 11,340 square feet.⁵ As the County outgrew the storage space in the courthouse, a wing was added to the south of the building in 1938 containing additional office space. While the exact configuration of this wing is unknown, this addition did combine one and two stories.⁶ With measurements taken from the 1987 asbestos abatement plans, it can be seen that this addition was approximately 51' 6" x 46' 6". With the 1964 additions roughly another 22,000 square feet was added to the courthouse.⁷

² Riggs, "New Look," 5.

³ Bo Hardwick, Tour of Court House, December 16, 2019.

⁴ "Horry and Conway's Big Celebration," *The Horry Herald*, May 28, 1908, 1.

⁵ M. F. Sarvis, Plat, "A Plan of the Court House and Jail lot in Conway, S. C. Containing One (1) Acre." September 6, 1906, Horry County Museum.

⁶ "New Addition Court House," *The Horry Herald*, January 20, 1938, 1.

⁷ Riggs, "New Look" 5.

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Upon entering the courthouse through the North (primary) entrance, the hallway is twelve feet wide and keeps this width for twenty-four feet where it then intersects with the only cross-hall in the building. Continuing past the cross-hall, the main corridor narrows to seven-and-a-half feet through both the 1908 section of the building and the 1938 addition on the south side. The cross-hall is fifteen-and-a-half feet for the first sixteen feet on both the east and west sides of the main hallway, where it then narrows to ten feet in width until it reaches the end of the original 1908 building. This cross-hall continues and narrows to seven feet in the 1964 addition for the length of both wings. The exit doors are seen in all four corridors from the intersection of these hallways. Hallways in the 1908 and 1938 sections of the building retain the period millwork, dentil crown moldings and transom windows above the doors. These corridors are mainly intact, although some modifications were required to maintain the buildings viability, such as the removal of all stairways in the 1908 section in order to add the extensions and the stairway to the basement. All of the 1964 hallways retain the original walnut paneling to the height of four and a half feet. Drywall is on the upper portion of these hall walls. The doors within these hallways are wood with a single slim vertical side lite. Within this section of hallways, doors to the courtroom and closets have no panes in them.

The section of hallway just inside the north (primary) entrance contains several memorial plaques and a portrait of General Peter Horry. The sheriff's office has a public counter and offices along the north side of the east corridor within the 1908 section. Across the hallway from the sheriff's office are probation and parole offices. The rest of the east wing contains offices on both sides of the central corridor for various uses including juvenile justice and delegation. The corridor to the west of the main hallway within the 1908 section on the north side has a portion of the sheriff's office and juvenile justice offices. Juvenile justice offices continue down the entire north side of this hallway. Conference rooms, various mechanical/electrical and janitor rooms line the south side of the west hallway. The corridor to the south of the hallway intersection contains probation and parole offices on both sides. This south wing on the lower floor is where five windows have been bricked in; four windows on the south end and the last on the east side. The east, south, and west hallways all contain restrooms, stairways and an elevator. As the 1908 courtroom on the second floor is located directly above the north door and cross-hall intersection, access between wings on the second floor is not possible without passing through the courtroom. The 1964 east and west corridors connect via a straight path through the middle of the courtroom when the doors on both sides of the courtroom are open.

The two-story courtroom on the second floor is the main primary space in the 1908 section of the building. The original paneled judge's bench commands the attention of the room with its imposing wall of paneled wood edged with pilasters and capped with an entablature and broken pediment behind it. Original millwork can be seen throughout the courtroom, including pedestals, banisters, crowns, dentils, and witness cubicles. The balcony is also edged with dentil molding. There are two columns supporting the balcony with capitals reminiscent of the Tuscan order.

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Jury and spectator chairs are original, but required reupholstering in 2002.⁸ In addition to the interior lights, this courtroom has natural lighting from the six double-hung windows at the rear of the room and from the nine clerestory windows, including seven at the rear in the balcony and two on the sides, near the front of the courtroom. Although the original specifications for the courthouse called for #1 tongue and groove pine flooring, carpet covers the floor in the majority of the courtroom.⁹ Spectator seating on the main floor of the courtroom still shows the original wood flooring beneath it. The transoms above the courtroom doors are painted. Currently traffic court convenes in this courtroom with the supporting offices located in the east wing.

On the north side at the end of the west wing is the original 1964 courtroom and has remained as such with only minimal alterations. The walnut paneling is the height of the ceiling and all original woodwork for the jury box, courtroom divisions, judge's bench and jury seating remain. The public seating matches what is in the 1908 courtroom, down to the emblems on the sides of the chairs. The juror and public seating were reupholstered and the carpeting was replaced during the 2002 renovations. The cornice behind the judge's bench was modified to accommodate the Horry County seal.¹⁰ Central jury court convenes here and the rest of this second floor wing contains both the judges and central court jury offices.

The south wing contains the magistrate courtroom, supporting offices, judge's chambers, conference rooms and various mechanical rooms. The main corridor here is not straight but runs east and west behind the 1908 courtroom with a corridor bisecting it running north and south. At the south end, the corridor makes a ninety degree turn to the east and then another short jog to the south. Access to the stairway and elevator are from this corridor. A second smaller hallway runs from the southwest corner of the 1908 courtroom to the rooms on the west side of the wing. Modifications that are more significant have been made to the magistrate courtroom and other offices, creating some unusual room configurations.

Alterations & Integrity

The 1964 remodeling raised the original 1908 section's roof on the short side wings and rear addition by eighteen inches. This was confirmed through the physical evidence of the remaining original trusses and by visual inspection to the outside of the building.¹¹ The roofline was further altered with the removal of the chimneys as the coal-fired boilers were replaced by a modern central heating and cooling system.¹² The old coal shoot still remains in the basement of the courthouse.¹³ The addition of air conditioning to the building similarly marked the end to the use of the speaking balcony above the front door. Prior to this time, people would congregate on the front lawn because it was cooler. A court employee would call out to those there for court proceedings from the balcony to come upstairs for their case. In addition to the new heating and

⁸ Pike, McFarland, Hall Associates, Inc. "Restorations & Alterations to: Horry County Courthouse," October 14, 2002, 3.

⁹ "Specification for a Court House to Be Erected For Horry County at Conway, South Carolina. *The Independent Republic Quarterly*, Spring 2000, Volume 34, Number 2, 12.

¹⁰ Pike, "Restorations," 3.

¹¹ Rodney Herndon, Tour of Courthouse, December 11, 2019.

¹² Fleming. "Court House Additions Rise," *Sun News*, January 2, 1964, 1; Riggs. "New Look," 5.

¹³ Herndon, Rodney, Tour of Courthouse.

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cooling system, upgrades to the inside of the 1908 courthouse included new floor coverings, lighting, and a sprinkler and alarm system. Acoustical plaster was used in the new additions to absorb sound. The new area was said to have been completely fire-resistant, however, the asbestos had to be removed in the 1980's.¹⁴ Changes were also made to the south entrance of the courthouse. According to the newspaper, The Sun News, the finishing touch to this renovation was not considered the columns and capitals that were added to the south entrance, but the handicap ramp that was installed alongside this entrance.¹⁵ Not only did this renovation bring large changes to the structure and changes to the way court cases were called, but it also changed the layout of the grounds themselves by eliminating the circular drive on the east side of the courthouse.¹⁶

In 1982, the Courthouse required repair to the portico as it was sinking into the ground and pulling the front facade of the 1908 portion of the structure with it. Five tiebacks were used to draw the portico and front face back into place. Three tiebacks were placed below the cornice and one on either side of the portico. Architectural appliques on the pilasters at the edge of the portico hide the lower tiebacks. The brick and stucco columns were replaced with redwood columns to lighten the load. Brick salvaged from the portico was used to rebuild the frieze, and the wood trim, railings and balustrade were repaired/replaced to match the originals.¹⁷ In addition, the granite steps were removed and steel piles and concrete used to brace the portico. The original granite steps were then put back in place.¹⁸

In 2002, there were additional renovations and restorations to the courthouse. The majority of the work was on the inside with the rearrangement of some walls. In both the 1908 and 1964 courtrooms, the jury and public seating were reupholstered. The door in the 1908 courtroom for the speaking balcony on the front facade was removed and rebuilt. The central jury courtroom in the 1938 portion of the building had more extensive renovations at this time.¹⁹

Outside, aluminum handrails were added at all entrances. Some of the windows had the deteriorating concrete window sills replaced, while some openings had new louvers installed. In addition, one flagpole was replaced, some trenching on the grounds to bring conduits for communications was done, and brick crosswalks were added on Second Ave.²⁰ Despite alterations to maintain use of the building, the structure retains sufficient historic integrity to convey the building's significance.

Vietnam Veterans of Horry County Memorial (May 25, 1985) – Noncontributing Object

The Vietnam Memorial is located in the northeast corner of the grounds. This memorial lists the names of all county residents that lost their lives during the Vietnam War. A circular paved area

¹⁴ Westbury & Associates/Architects, "Horry County Courthouse" Asbestos Removal Plans.

¹⁵ Riggs, "New Look," 5.

¹⁶ Conway Photograph.

¹⁷ Wilkins, Wood & Associates, Architects/Planners. *"Renovations and Restorations to the Horry County Courthouse."*

¹⁸ Schoolbred, *"Foundation Underpinning Horry County Court House."*

¹⁹ Pike, "Restorations." 3.

²⁰ Ibid 1 - 3.

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surrounded by plantings contains two small stone benches and a granite sculpture engraved with the outline of South Vietnam. The names of the fallen soldiers are engraved within the outline. A flagpole flying the American flag is present behind the sculpture.

Veterans Memorial (November 11, 2004) – Noncontributing Object

This is a granite monument memorializing veterans from all branches of the service and is located in the northwest corner of the grounds. The layout follows that of the Vietnam Memorial, with a paved circular area surrounded by plantings and with two small stone benches facing the main memorial. The memorial consists of three slabs of dark granite forming a triangular top. Text and the image of a bald eagle engrave the granite. On the east side of the paved area is a piece of limestone recovered from the rubble of the Pentagon in remembrance of 9/11. The names that are behind the memorial are those of the memorial committee. Seven flagpoles encircle the southern half of the memorial, six smaller flagpoles displaying the flags of different branches of military service, with a larger pole flying the American flag at the center.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1908 - 1964

Significant Dates

1908

1938

1964

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Little, Henry Pyle, Builder

Leitner, Joseph, Architect

Wilkins, William, Architect

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Horry County Courthouse is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A: Politics/Government for its long service as the center of law and public space in Horry County, South Carolina. Built in 1908 as the county's third courthouse, the courthouse on Third Avenue is significant for its construction as a public symbol of Horry County's rise from one of the poorest and most isolated counties in antebellum South Carolina to be among the leaders in the state's turn-of-the-century agriculture economy. Larger in size and with more modern accommodations than its predecessor, the Horry County Courthouse also provided local residents with a more convenient and functional space better-equipped to serve a growing, active population. Significant additions and renovations were undertaken at the courthouse in 1938 and 1964. The building is also significant under criterion C as an excellent example of the Neoclassical Revival style and displays many character-defining features of the style on both its exterior and interior.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A: Politics/Government

Early Courthouses in Horry County

The Horry County Courthouse on Third Avenue in Conway, South Carolina, is eligible for listing under Criterion A in Politics/Government for its nearly century-long role as the center of governance and public space for surrounding Horry County. Desires for a local courthouse where area residents might more easily access the law had played a significant role in the 1801 creation of Horry County, originally known as "Horry District" when it was split off from the larger Georgetown District. Bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the east and a maze of dense rivers and swamps to the west, much of Horry County's early history was influenced by its relative isolation from the rest of the Palmetto State. Local residents cited that challenging topography in petitioning the legislature for the county's creation, with signers citing the "dangerous & frequently unpassable" streams they had to navigate to reach the courthouse and other locations in Georgetown, located approximately forty miles away from the eventual Horry County seat of Conway. On December 19, 1801, the bill for the new district passed and Horry County came into being.²¹ This legislative action allowed for the appointing of a Commission to oversee the construction of a courthouse and jail.²² In early 1802, commissioners entered into an agreement for the construction of a 28' x 36' ft. courthouse "built of Wood and fixed on Brick Pillars" to be finished by 1803.²³

²¹ Catherine H. Lewis, "Petition to Establish Horry District & Build Courthouse and Jail; or The Curious Case of What Happened to Hugerborough." *The Independent Republic Quarterly*, Fall 1985, Vol. 19, No. 4, 27 - 28, 35.

²² Catherine H. Lewis, *Horry County South Carolina, 1730 - 1993*. (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 22.

²³ Lewis, *Horry County South Carolina, 1730 - 1993*, 22. "Journal of the Horry District Board of Commissioners 1802-1851." *The Independent Republic Quarterly*, Winter 1992. Vol. 26, No. 1, 5-9.

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The c.1803 construction of the county's first courthouse in Conway allowed area residents to conduct routine legal business and pursue (or face) justice without having to make the longer, inconvenient, and at times dangerous journey to Georgetown. Yet within a couple decades, this structure proved increasingly inadequate. In 1823, a Commission consisting of A.W. McRae, John Servis, William Johnston, Benjamin Gause Jr. and Sam Willison with \$10,000 received from the state for a new courthouse. A lot obtained from Joshua S. Norman and his wife at the corner of Main Street and Third Avenue in Conway was selected for the site, and the design of the new building was credited to architect Robert Mills. The second courthouse for Horry County opened its doors in April 1825. A new jail was also eventually constructed, but its exact date of completion is unclear.²⁴ Robert Mills was Commissioner of Public Works for South Carolina at the time of the construction of the second courthouse. When he had control, Mills designed his courthouses to have the courtrooms on the second floor, with offices and storage space on the first floor. His goal was to create quiet for the court proceedings. Mills also made the first floors fireproof by using brick bearing walls without wood studs and joists.²⁵ Horry County's second courthouse followed this plan. Because the government was so small in the 19th century, most elected officials ran their offices by themselves, some only on a part-time basis, so large offices were not needed.²⁶

Growth, Progress, and the Horry County Courthouse

The circumstances that led to the construction of the Horry County Courthouse on Third Avenue reflected the county's broader development from a relative antebellum backwater to an ascendant leader in the state's New South agricultural economy. With the exception of some sections along the Waccamaw River, Horry County's landscape was ill-suited for the sort of slave-based rice cultivation that thrived in other coastal counties, where plantation agriculture structured much of daily life and enriched classes of white planters. Instead, Horry County became what one historian describes as "a refuge of yeomen farmers subsisting on their modest holdings and bartering with neighbors." Census records indicate Horry was the poorest county in South Carolina in 1860 and had the highest percentage of white residents (nearly 70 percent) outside of mountainous Pickens County, then the state's westernmost county. After the Civil War, the arrival of railroad and telegraph lines in 1887 enhanced the county's connectivity with the rest of the South Carolina and beyond, opening markets for forest products and other crops. The most important of the latter was bright leaf tobacco, thousands of acres of which were grown across the county by the 1900s. This gave rise to successful tobacco markets in towns like Conway and Loris and spurred broader changes in Horry's traditionally subsistence-based farm economy. By the 1920s, Horry County was the largest producer of tobacco in South Carolina.²⁷

²⁴ Lewis, *Horry County South Carolina*, 24 - 25.

²⁵ John M. Bryan, ed., *Robert Mills Architect* (Washington D.C.: The American Institute of Architects Press, 1989) 79 - 80.

²⁶ Lewis, *Horry County South Carolina*, 24 - 25.

²⁷ Eldred E. Prince, Jr., "Horry County" *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, April 27, 2016, <https://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/horry-county/>. U.S. Census Bureau, Population 1860. Prepared by Social Explorer. Oconee County, today the westernmost county in S.C., was split from Pickens in 1868. Hurley E. Badders, "Oconee County," *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, June 8, 2016, <https://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/oconee-county/>.

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These developments led more and more turn-of-the-century residents to believe that the 1825 courthouse was no longer adequate, nor was the nearby county jail. For those who actually used the courthouse on a semi-regular basis, practical considerations were likely paramount, with lack of space being the old building's most obvious and acutely felt limitation. Census records show that, from the eve of the 1825 courthouse's construction to 1900, the county's population increased nearly five times over, from approximately 5,000 to 23,000. Accordingly, by century's end there were also significantly more people who on any given day found themselves needing or desiring to make use of the courthouse. Articles in the *Horry Herald* newspaper from the years leading up to the third courthouse's construction frequently included complaints from residents who were unable to watch legal proceedings for lack of space. One 1905 editorial said that "hardly half" of those who wished to watch trials could fit in the courtroom. After a number of residents found themselves "disgusted" a few months later at being unable to attend a high profile trial, the *Herald* sarcastically noted that the local tobacco warehouse could accommodate visitors, and perhaps the county should start holding court there if a new courthouse could not be built. Some locals likewise noted more general signs of age on the old facility, including cracks in the walls that prompted concerns about safety, as well as such poor heat and ventilation that it caused some visitors to become ill. Another complaint had less to do with the courthouse itself and more with how the town's own progress had had an unfortunate implication for the old courthouse site. When the railroad finally came to Conway, the tracks ran down Main Street—i.e. directly in front of the courthouse—meaning that court proceedings were disrupted by noise every time an engine rolled through town.²⁸

The courthouse on Third Avenue ultimately resolved these issues for locals, thus relieving some of the more practical strains that had arisen as Horry County moved into a new, more modern era in the early twentieth century. At the same time, the courthouse also fulfilled local desires for a center of law and public space that would better reflect that era's growth and progress, and thereby providing Horry a fitting new symbol of its rising place among the counties of South Carolina. The writer of a 1905 article noted the preponderance of new brick buildings in Conway and stated it was shameful for the County to conduct business in the old buildings, as public buildings are an index to the "progressive spirit of a people."²⁹ Another writer from Murrells Inlet praised local interest in constructing the "much needed" new courthouse and jail and drew a direct connection to the county's economic development, observing that, "The county is judged by her public buildings. Judging by the progress the county is making in agriculture and in the lumber industry, she will soon take her place with the leading counties of the state."³⁰

²⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, Population 1820 and 1900. Prepared by Social Explorer. "The New Court House," *The Horry Herald*, August 7, 1902. "Nixonville," *The Horry Herald*, May 18, 1905. "Give Us New Buildings," *The Horry Herald*, April 27, 1905 ("hardly half" quotation). [article title obscured], *The Horry Herald*, September 21, 1905, p. 1 ("disgusted" quotation). "Purely Personal," *The Horry Herald*, March 1, 1906. Lewis, *Horry County South Carolina*, 25.

²⁹ "Give Us New Buildings," *The Horry Herald*, April 27, 1905, 2.

³⁰ "Murrell's Inlet News," *The Horry Herald*, May 8, 1902.

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While many locals readily perceived the limitations of the old courthouse, several years passed before enough of the general public felt that those shortcomings were extensive enough to justify the expense of building a new facility. In the summer of 1902, the people of Horry County had the opportunity to vote for a new courthouse. However, the measure did not pass.³¹ At the end of its term in March of 1903, the Grand Jury for Horry County recommended the construction of a new courthouse and jail, noting former grand jurors had recommended the same. They did suggest that the State Senator and delegates in the House of Representatives should pass an act for the construction of the buildings and not put it to another vote of the people.³² By January of 1906, a circulating petition called for the building of a new courthouse and jail, and the construction of bridges across the Waccamaw River, signaling a shift in public opinion. The public anticipated that the legislature would take some action due to the large number of people who signed the petition.³³

Action was taken on February 17, 1906, when the South Carolina General Assembly approved a bill introduced by Col. D.A. Spivey that authorized Horry County to issue \$40,000 in bonds for the construction of a new courthouse and jail. Statue No. 129 also required the governor to appointment three men with business experience to become the Building Commission. The Commission had the authority to sell the bonds, sell the old courthouse and jail lots, hire an architect, purchase land, build and furnish both the courthouse and jail, and use the remainder of funds to build bridges across the Waccamaw River.³⁴ Under this act, South Carolina governor, Paul Hamilton appointed attorney and first mayor of Conway, Col. C. P. Quattlebaum, and Conway businessmen John C. Spivey and J. P. Derham to the Building Commission.³⁵

The first order of business was to decide on the site for the new courthouse and jail. Under consideration were several new sites, along with the parcel where the current courthouse stood. A correspondent, using Em. for identification, wrote a column in the May 10, 1906 newspaper evaluating the various proposed sites. He concluded the site of the current courthouse was too small. Purchasing more land adjacent to this site and tearing down the old courthouse made this the most expensive option. Purchasing land at market value was also expensive. This left the proposals containing offers of some amount of free land. In addition, the Building Commission could sell the current courthouse and apply the proceeds to the building of the bridges that the statute allowed the Commission to construct. Em. concluded that the free land offered by William Lewis was the best due to its relative proximity to the center of the downtown business district in Conway.³⁶ The Building Commission ultimately came to the same conclusion and

³¹ *The Horry Herald*, September 4, 1902, c. 1, p. 2. "Newspaper Editorial," *The Horry Herald*, March 12, 1903, p. 2.

³² "Final Presentment of the Grand Jury," *The Horry Herald*, March 12, 1903, p. 2.

³³ "Important Legislative Measures," *The Horry Herald*, January 18, 1906, p. 1.

³⁴ Lewis, *Horry County, South Carolina*, 26. "Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Regular Session of 1906, South Carolina," 270 – 273.

³⁵ "Court House Commiss'rs," *The Horry Herald*, February 22, 1906, p. 1.

³⁶ "Lewis' Offer," *The Horry Herald*, May 10, 1906, 1. Although the location for the third courthouse was just two blocks from either of the two previous courthouses, some were still concerned that the site was too far away from the main business district along Main Street and might effectively split and weaken Conway's commercial core. The first courthouse was off Main Street on 5th Avenue, close to the old County Library. The second courthouse was built at the corner of Third Avenue and Main Street and today houses Conway City Hall. Lewis, *Horry County*,

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made the deal with Lewis for the price of \$1,000. The total package included the six lots that combined to make three acres, a half-acre lot across Second Avenue, adjacent to the courthouse for the new jail, right of ways on all four sides adjacent to the new courthouse lot, and drainage rights over the adjoining property owned by Lewis. The new courthouse location would be on Third Avenue.³⁷ In addition, the Commission sold the old courthouse in 1908. Auctioning it off fetched a price of \$4,000, paid by Mayor Jeremiah Smith who bought it for the City of Conway.³⁸ The combined six lots for the building of the courthouse made the new parcel the largest lot in Conway at the time of construction.³⁹ The deed for these lots also assigned forever to Horry County rights to a sixty-five-foot right-of-way over any lands owned by William Lewis in Conway.⁴⁰

As plans developed, it became clear that the new Horry County Courthouse on Third Avenue would offer ample space for government offices and, through its enhanced functionality, strike a modern contrast from its predecessor. The Commission went on to sell the \$40,000 bonds allotted for in the legislation on June 21, 1906 to the Security Trust Company.⁴¹ By August 2, 1906 the Building Commission was advertising for sealed bids on the contract to build the courthouse.⁴² A contract was obtained in 1906 with work beginning in October of that year and the building completed in 1908.⁴³ The original bid for the courthouse was \$24,590. However, contractor H. P. Little required additional funds for extra work bringing the total cost of the courthouse to over \$31,000.⁴⁴ The architect for the courthouse was Leitner & Wilkerson from Wilmington, North Carolina. The new building housed the courtroom and government offices, which made it the focal point for the County's government business. The first floor would contain rooms for the clerk's office, probate judge, County auditor and the County treasurer. The clerk's office would have a large adjoining fireproof room for records and the other three would have fire-proof vaults in them. The first floor would also include the County Supervisor's Office, the Sheriff's Office and a grand jury room. On the second floor would be the courtroom, two jury rooms, the judge's private consultation room, and two other rooms. According to the local newspaper, the use for these rooms was undecided, although an office for the Superintendent of Education and a witness waiting room were under consideration. All the rooms were to be spacious and well-ventilated. To enhance the light and ventilation for the courtroom, the wings of the courthouse roof were lower than the courtroom roof, allowing for plenty of windows. There were three staircases, one at each end of the cross hall and a private stairway for the judge located near the south entrance.⁴⁵ One additional difference from the old courthouse was the location of the bathrooms. Restrooms would be located in the basement of the new facility, while

South Carolina, 22 & 27. Quattlebaum, Paul, "Early Conway As I Knew It." *The Independent Republic Quarterly*, Fall 1990, V24, 4, p. 25 – 28.

³⁷ "Site Selected," *The Horry Herald*, June 7, 1906, 1.

³⁸ Nelle Bryan, Rebecca Bryan, Eugenia Buck Cutts, Carl Sessions, Eunice McMillan Thomas and Ruby Lee Moore Wachtman. "Conway Landmarks," *The Independent Quarterly*, January 1971, Vol 5, No. 1, 5.

³⁹ Johnson. "Map of Property Owned by W.R. Lewis," Plat Book 1, Page 1, Horry County Register of Deeds.

⁴⁰ Deed Book ZZ, Page 186. Horry County Register of Deeds.

⁴¹ "Soon to Begin," *The Horry Herald*, June 21, 1906, 1.

⁴² "Notice to Contractors," *The Horry Herald*, August 2, 1906, 8.

⁴³ "Celebration," 1.

⁴⁴ Bryan et al., "Landmarks" 9.

⁴⁵ "Court House Plans," *The Horry Herald*, April 12, 1906, 1.

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visitors to 1825 courthouse still used an outhouse.⁴⁶ Given the time period, it is also likely that some spaces in the courthouse were racially segregated or exclusive to whites.

On May 22, 1908, a community celebration with music, entertainment, decorations, distinguished visitors, speakers, a parade, and a barbeque furnished by the city took place to acclaim the new courthouse. Governor Ansel served as Orator of the Day. The crowd was estimated at six to seven thousand.⁴⁷ The large grounds of the courthouse helped to facilitate this celebration, and since that time have been transformed into a park-like setting in downtown Conway with its many mature trees. Mr. W. L. Bryan, who was Clerk of Courts from 1909 until 1927, planted many of these trees with the assistance of Berry, the courthouse janitor.⁴⁸ The headline in the *Horry Herald* on June 4, 1908 proclaimed: "The First Judge to Hold Court in Horry County's New Court House." The Honorable Samuel Wilds Gillespie Shipp presided, with Solicitor Wells as the prosecuting attorney.⁴⁹ Court was open for business, but the courtroom also provided space for other civic functions. The *Herald* also posted a notice for the County Executive Committee to hold a meeting on June 12th in the courtroom.⁵⁰

Additions to the Horry County Courthouse

In 1937, the *Horry Herald* was printing articles stating that the courthouse was running out of room to store records and suggesting that adding a wing would take care of the problem.⁵¹ In addition, the newly created office of Horry County tax collector also required an office space.⁵² Although the County did collect taxes prior to this, the treasurer had used locations around the county for collecting taxes and the sheriff kept the tax records.⁵³ Two bills, House 500 and Senate 394, were introduced by the Horry County Delegation and Act No. 529 passed on May 4, 1937 to provide within it \$10,000 for the repair and addition to the Courthouse.⁵⁴ The Delegation consisted of G. Stanley Bryant, C. F. Best, and J. Robert Carter.⁵⁵ The authority to repair and add the addition went to the Horry County Board of Commissioners, along with the ability to augment the funds with any other Federal money they could secure.⁵⁶ The estimate for the

⁴⁶ Dr. Frank A. Sanders, "Horry District's Second Court House," *The Independent Republic Quarterly*, April 1969, Vol. 3, No. 2, 15.

⁴⁷ "Celebration," 1.

⁴⁸ *Horry County Survey of Historic Places*, (Georgetown, South Carolina: Waccamaw Regional Planning and Development Council, 1973), 47.

⁴⁹ "The First Judge to Hold Court in Horry County's New Court House." *The Horry Herald*, June 4, 1908, 1.

⁵⁰ Norton, J. O. "Notice," *The Horry Herald*, June 4, 1908, 1. The 1825 courthouse likewise hosted other civic events, however the larger size of the Third Avenue courthouse undoubtedly made it a more convenient and functional event space by 1908. Bryan et al., "Landmarks," 5.

⁵¹ "Court House Needs Room," 1.

⁵² "New Addition Court House," 1.

⁵³ "Paying Up The Taxes." *Horry News*, February 3, 1874, 3; Burroughs, J. Benjamin. "Abijah H. Skipper," *The Independent Republic Quarterly*, 2012, Vol 46, No. 3-4, 8.

⁵⁴ "Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Regular Session of 1937." 1114.

⁵⁵ Lena Lee, Research Librarian Legislative Council. E-mail to author, 3 May 2021.

⁵⁶ "Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Regular Session of 1937." 1117.

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addition was \$32,000.⁵⁷ Additional money came from the Works Progress Administration.⁵⁸ The architects chosen to do the work were Hopkins and Baker.⁵⁹ By January 24, 1938, bids were accepted for the construction of the new wing that would be placed on the south side of the courthouse.⁶⁰ The clerk of courts and treasurer's office were enlarged and the bathrooms were moved from the basement and a new heating plant for the building installed in the space. Improvements to the second floor included two new jury rooms with doors at the ends of the jury seating in the courtroom.⁶¹ During the 1938 construction of the addition, the columns on the front portico were also repaired for the third or fourth time, as the concrete plaster was not adhering to the center of the columns.⁶²

In the 1960s, the courthouse had the same problem as in the 1930s in that it was running out of space. Attorney Ralph Hoffman headed the Courthouse Improvement and County Office Building Committee appointed by the Horry County Legislative Delegation on July 16, 1962, which recommended extensive renovations to the courthouse. Other committee members were Frank Campbell, S. C. Chapman, Mrs. Alston H. Prince, and Mrs. J. T. Rutledge.⁶³ Representatives Windell McCracklin and Winston Vaught introduced bill 563 in the SC General Assembly on April 23, 1963 for a \$500,000 bond issue for improvements to the courthouse.⁶⁴ The architects for this addition were Baker and Gill. According to the report from the Courthouse Improvement Committee, no other architects were taken under consideration because Baker and Gill were the successors to the firm that provided the plans for the 1908 courthouse.⁶⁵ The Committee unanimously selected the firm because they thought Baker and Gill were the most qualified for the job.⁶⁶ After the report was provided, a new Building Committee, consisting of Luke Benson, Mance Watkins, Robert Bellamy, W. T. Johnson, clerk, all members of the Board of Commissioners, and Ralph Hoffman as an advisory member, authorized Bakers and Gill to create the plans and specifications for the bids. It is interesting to note that all five bids received listed Brass Plumbing and Heating of Florence for the plumbing and heating contractors and Gregory Electric Company of Columbia for the electrical contractor.⁶⁷ The contract went to the lowest bidder, Dargan Construction Company, for \$464,714. The original bid was for \$479,714; the decrease came from one of the proposed elevators being eliminated resulting in a \$15,000 budget reduction.⁶⁸ However, on November 12, 1963, the Board of Commissioners passed a resolution that the second elevator would be installed and that the funding for this be made available.⁶⁹

⁵⁷ "New Addition Court House," Back Page.

⁵⁸ "Court House is Completed." 1.

⁵⁹ See Succession of Architecture Firms, Sec 8, Page 24.

⁶⁰ "New Addition Court House," 1.

⁶¹ "New Addition Court House," Back Page.

⁶² "Court House is Completed," *The Horry Herald*, January 12, 1939, 1.

⁶³ "Minutes to the Horry County Board of Commissioners." June 10, 1963, 3.

⁶⁴ "Horry Courthouse Bill Is Offered," *The Horry Herald*, April 25, 1963, 1. "Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Regular Session of 1963," 1123.

⁶⁵ See Succession of Architecture Firms in Developmental History/Additional Context.

⁶⁶ "Minutes." June 10, 1963, 3.

⁶⁷ "Minutes to the Horry County Board of Commissioners." September 17, 1963, 3.

⁶⁸ "Court House Bid Awarded," *The Conway Field*, September 25, 1963, 1.

⁶⁹ "Minutes to the Horry County Board of Commissioners." November 12, 1963, 2.

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Courthouses and jails were traditionally built in pairs, but this combination was no longer needed after the 1964 addition to the Third Avenue Courthouse. A windowless holding cell for the prisoners was added next to the main courtroom. Additional government services added within this building included a mortgage room, transfer files & mapping room, billing and filing room, photographic room, probation and parole offices, master in equity office, and an office for the probate judge. There was also a tax return room added at the end of the hall on the east side near the door for people to pay their taxes. The functions for the old courtroom were split with the addition of the civil and criminal courtroom in the west wing.⁷⁰ These alterations to the courthouse transformed the building into a large center for government business.

Criterion C: Architecture

The Courthouse is significant under Criterion C as an excellent local example of Neoclassical Revival public architecture. The Neoclassical Revival, also referred to as the Classic Revival, is rooted in the architectural precedent of the Neoclassical, or Early Classical Revival, movement of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. American architects of the early United States favored the style in public architecture for its ties to the Roman Republic and its popularity in France, the primary ally of the country during the War of Independence. Monumental public buildings were erected in the Neoclassical style by prominent architects like Robert Mills, a South Carolina native who is credited with the design for Horry County's second courthouse. The greatest champion of Neoclassical architecture in the Early Republic, however, was Thomas Jefferson, who not only used the style when designing his private residences, but also pushed for its use in the design of institutional buildings in Washington, D.C., Richmond, VA, and at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.⁷¹ The Neoclassicism movement esteemed order, simplicity, clarity, and logic.⁷² Proponents of classical architecture, however, also recognized its ability to convey power and authority going back many centuries. As such, variations on classical architecture dominated the design of public buildings such as courthouses for most of the history of the United States, until the advent of Modernism in the mid-20th century.⁷³

A renewed interest in classical architecture in America started in earnest with the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. Daniel Burnham, the architect overseeing the exposition, convinced the designers of the Court of Honor to follow a uniform classical architecture executed in an all-white color scheme. The architecture of the exposition was instrumental in the emergence of the Beaux-Arts style, driven by a new generation of American architects educated at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in France who were interested in more academic replication of classic precedents, namely those of Ancient Greece and Rome, and the Italian Renaissance.⁷⁴ However, the exposition also generated intense public interest in the architecture of colonial America, with a very broad definition of "colonial" encompassing several styles popular between the American Revolution and the Civil War. Each state had a pavilion built on a

⁷⁰ Riggs, "New Look." 6.

⁷¹ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2019), 236-242.

⁷² "Introduction/What is Neoclassicism?" http://www.neoclassicism.us/Content/What_Is_Neoclassicism/.

⁷³ Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to Contemporary American Architecture* (New York: Plume, 2001), 103-104.

⁷⁴ David P. Handlin, *American Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 132-134.

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smaller architectural scale more in line with the size of residences, many of which featured a Neoclassical design.⁷⁵ The rebirth of Neoclassicism in the 1890s corresponded with a reframing of Southern history which presented a highly romanticized vision of the region prior to the Civil War. Part of the idealization of the “Old South” included the association of stately plantation houses with porticos supported by giant classical columns with the colonial South. While the giant columns of Neoclassical architecture in fact largely postdate the American Revolution, the link between these large-scale front porticos and the colonial South was imprinted irrevocably in the American imagination.⁷⁶ A replica of Mount Vernon at the exposition with a full-facade porch added to the Georgian house contributed to the erroneous idea that porches were colonial in character. Georgian, Federal, Early Classical Revival, and Greek Revival architecture soon became infused into the Neoclassical Revival style.⁷⁷

The Horry County Courthouse displays many features typical of the Neoclassical Revival style. The careful symmetry of the façade composition with its regular distribution of fenestration and the central entrance with its double-height portico are standard features of the style. The architectural detailing is likewise consistent with Neoclassical Revival design, featuring Greek Order capitals, entablatures, dentil molding, and patterned balustrades, all of which draw extensively from the architectural vocabulary established by the Early Classical Revival.⁷⁸ The use of red brick and white trim also suggests a Jeffersonian influence, which would be consistent with architectural trends of the period. Jefferson’s contributions to American architecture began to be recognized in the 1890s, and imitation of the red brick manses of Virginia were very popular within the Colonial Revival, a stylistic cousin of the Neoclassical Revival.⁷⁹ The ultimate aesthetic effect of the design of the Horry County Courthouse is a projection of monumental authority with strong ties to the architecture of the early days of the United States.

Interestingly, the Neoclassical Revival design established by the architects of the original courthouse in 1908 was strictly maintained for the exteriors of both the 1938 and 1964 additions, even though they were built during periods when stripped classicism and Modernism tended to be dominate in courthouse architecture. Both additions follow the same patterns, scale, massing, and materials of the 1908 section and blend in so well with the original structure that without careful investigation one would think the building, as it currently stands, was completed in 1908. The consistency of the exterior design over so many decades may be partly attributable to the fact that the two architectural firms for the additions were successor companies from the original firm of Leitner & Wilkins.⁸⁰

There are very few contemporary public buildings with which to compare the architecture of the Courthouse. The nearest local example in terms of style is the Burroughs School, built in three sections starting between 1905 and 1923. While the school exhibits some Neoclassical Revival elements, the design is more heavily influenced by the Georgian Revival. The one-story front

⁷⁵ McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 446.

⁷⁶ Richard Guy Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2004), 50-51.

⁷⁷ McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 446.

⁷⁸ McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 435-436.

⁷⁹ Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House*, 148-153.

⁸⁰ See Succession of Architecture Firms, Section 8, Page 24.

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porch on the two-story red brick building is recessed and does not have the striking visual dominance of the massive porticoes of most Neoclassical Revival buildings. Additionally, the symmetry of the façade of the Burroughs School was altered by later additions.⁸¹ Apart from the Burroughs School, there are no contemporary public buildings in Conway comparable to the Courthouse in terms of style and scale.⁸² With its monumental scale, imposing Neoclassical Revival appearance, and its siting as the lone building within an entire city block, the Courthouse is clearly marked as an important and distinct element within the built environment of Conway.

The Horry County Courthouse is a local landmark example of the Neoclassical Revival and the most monumental representation of the style in Conway. Its 20th century design is rooted in the precedent established by the Early Classical Revival style of the postcolonial period, and the extensive use of classical detailing relates the building back to centuries of Classical and Neoclassical public architecture, projecting a sense of authority and grandeur appropriate to the seat of the local government. Although major additions were completed in 1938 and 1964, the expansion of the building was executed in the same style as the original 1908 courthouse, providing strong continuity of design on the building's exterior. The designers of these additions eschewed popular styles of their own time periods in order to maintain the Neoclassical Revival architecture of the original building, and the additions have now attained significance in their own right. The Horry County Courthouse is an excellent and highly intact example of Neoclassical Revival architecture in Conway.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Current Use

The Horry County Third Avenue Courthouse currently holds the Sheriff's Office, Probation and Parole offices, Central Traffic Court, Magistrate Court, Central Jury Court, and the Solicitor's Jury Trial Division. While the building is still used for government purposes, in 2002 a new courthouse and government building was dedicated on Second Avenue adjacent to the Third Avenue Courthouse. Expansion to an even larger space was necessary because of the massive growth in the County. According to the U. S. Census the 1970 population of the county was 69,992 and by 2000 it had expanded to 196,629. The new building took over many of the more significant functions of the Third Avenue Courthouse including the hearing of all criminal cases.

Contractor

Henry Pyle Little was the contractor for the courthouse and not only built this structure, but was the contractor for many other buildings in Conway during the building boom, including the Conway Methodist Church, the Arthur Burroughs House, the addition to the Kingston Presbyterian Church, the Spivey Building, and the Planters Tobacco Warehouse.⁸³

H. P. Little was from Johnson City in Tennessee and moved to Conway in 1899. In addition to constructing buildings, H. P. Little owned and operated a brick manufacturing plant that he

⁸¹ National Register of Historic Properties, Burroughs School (NR# 84002047).

⁸² Langdale, *Architectural Survey of Conway*, 49.

⁸³ Langdale, *Architectural Survey of Conway*, 49.

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moved from Toddville to Conway in 1908. The top of his cost estimate sheets proclaim “H. P. Little, Contractor, Builder and Manufacturer of Brick.” Not only did Little help to build the City of Conway, including the tobacco warehouse on Fourth Avenue and Elm Street, he was also concerned with the welfare of the town. H.P. Little was active in local politics by serving as an alderman in 1903, as the mayor of Conway from 1909-1914, and as a County Commissioner in the 1920s.⁸⁴

Succession of Architecture Firms

The original firm designing the 1908 courthouse was Leitner and Wilkins. Leitner left the firm in 1908.⁸⁵ Wilkins practiced on his own and with others until 1924 when he joined practice with Frank V. Hopkins to form the company of Wilkins and Hopkins. This company lasted only six years, when Wilkins died in 1932.⁸⁶ Hopkins and Baker formed in 1935, which was the company that designed the addition in 1938. In 1948, this company became Hopkins, Baker and Gill. Baker and Gill was founded in 1956,⁸⁷ which was the company responsible for the 1964 additions.⁸⁸ Next, the company became Baker, Gill and Wilkins in 1962, Gill and Wilkins in 1965, Gill, Wilkins and Wood in 1972, and Wilkins, Wood and Associates, Ltd in 1977.⁸⁹ Wilkins, Wood and Associates was the company that did the restorations to the main facade of the courthouse in 1982 after the structural repairs to the portico were finished.

Local Culture

While the building is significant for the continued use and the additions of governmental functions conducted within it, and it has also become woven into the local culture. Locals tell stories about many different court cases with the most infamous case from the 1920s. The trial of Edmund Bingham, who was accused of murdering his mother, brother, sister and his two nieces. This trial was moved from Florence County to Horry County after the court ruled the accused, Mr. Bingham, could not get a fair trial within its jurisdiction. Before the trial commenced in Horry County, Mr. Bingham pronounced curses on the officials and all who testified against him. One witness died of a heart attack while in the courtroom, and four witnesses were dead before the trial ended. In addition, during the Bingham trial, it started to rain and continued raining until Conway flooded. The flood was considered part of the curse and named “The Bingham Freshet”. This trial resulted in books, magazine articles, television programs, and many newspaper articles being written about it. Even today after Hurricane Florence, there was a reference given to the Bingham Freshet in the *Post and Courier* on September 24, 2018.⁹⁰ Closer to home, the Bingham

⁸⁴ Ernestine Little, “H. P. Little.” *The Independent Republic Quarterly*, October 1973, V7 19.

⁸⁵ “Leitner, Joseph F. North Carolina Architects & Builders – A Biographical Dictionary,” accessed March 12, 2021, <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000235>.

⁸⁶ Wilkins, William J. *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willaim_J_Wilkins_\(architect\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willaim_J_Wilkins_(architect)).

⁸⁷ Lucas Hardy, Proposal Manager, Moseley Architects, Current successor company from the line starting with Leitner and Wilkins, email to author, April 28, 2021.

⁸⁸ “Minutes.” June 10, 1963, 3.

⁸⁹ Lucas Hardy, April 28, 2021.

⁹⁰ Jennifer Berry Hawes, Andrew Brown, “One tight-knit SC town. Two rivers flooding. A Waiting Game in Bucksport.” https://www.postandcourier.com/news/one-tight-knit-sc-town-two-rivers-flooding-a-waiting/article_b7853362-c005-11e8-9ad4-f7c57b4d0c40.html.

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story of curses is talked about in presentations at the Horry County Museum and Conway
Downtown Alive uses this story on their fall Ghost Walk, as it continues to become more and
more intertwined with local folklore. The grounds of the courthouse continue to be used for
county celebrations, memorial services, and job fairs.

DRAFT

Horry County Courthouse
Name of Property

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U.S. Census Bureau Returns, compiled by Social Explorer.

Westbury & Associates/Architects. "Horry County Courthouse," Asbestos Removal Plans Digital Scan of Original Document.

Wilkins, Wood & Associates, Architects/Planners. "Renovations and Restorations to the Horry County Courthouse," Digital Scan of Original Document.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☒ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 1289

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3.12

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Horry County Courthouse

Name of Property

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Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: D_North_American_1983_HARN

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 33.834065 | Longitude: -79.048340 |
| 2. Latitude: 33.833100 | Longitude: -79.047688 |
| 3. Latitude: 33.832605 | Longitude: -79.048625 |
| 4. Latitude: 33.83359 | Longitude: -79.049290 |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The parcel of the Third Avenue Horry County Courthouse per the deed is, "bounded Northwardly by Third Avenue, Eastwardly by Elmwood Street, Southwardly by Second Avenue and Westwardly by Beaty Street" (Elmwood Street is now Elm Street). Boundary description taken from third page of the deed which also contains a plat and an additional plat of downtown Conway recorded in Plat Book 1, Page 1. It is comprised of Lots 81, 82, 83, 94, 95, and 96 as shown on the plat included on page 3 of the deed. There is also a second plat titled, Map of property owned by W. R. Lewis, showing the dimensions of the property to be 330' x 396'.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated boundary encompasses the entire historic property, including the courthouse and its surrounding grounds.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Lou Conklin/Senior Planner

organization: Horry County

street & number: 1301 Second Avenue, Suite 1D09

city or town: Conway state: SC zip code: 29526

e-mail: conklinl@horrycounty.org

telephone: 843-915-7892

date: 10-28-2020

Additional Documentation

Horry County Courthouse

Name of Property

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Horry County Court House

City or Vicinity: 1201 Third Avenue, Conway

County: Horry

State: South Carolina

Photographer: Lou Conklin,

Date Photographed: December of 2018 through October 2020

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 23. Exterior, North (primary) elevation; View: South.
- 2 of 23. Exterior, Perspective of North (primary) elevation w/West (secondary) elevation; View: Southeast.
- 3 of 23. Exterior, North (primary) elevation; View: South, Detail, Portico.
- 4 of 23. Exterior, North (primary) elevation; View: Detail, Portico.

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- 5 of 23. Exterior, Perspective of Pavilion North (primary) elevation and East (secondary) elevation; View: Southwest.
- 6 of 23. Exterior, East (secondary) elevation; View: West.
- 7 of 23. Exterior, South (rear) elevation; View: North.
- 8 of 23. Exterior, South (rear) elevation; View: North, Detail, Porch.
- 9 of 23. Exterior, Perspective of 1938 addition, South (rear) elevation West (secondary) elevation; View: Northeast.
- 10 of 23. Exterior, West (secondary) elevation; View: East.
- 11 of 23. Exterior, Northwest Armed Forces Memorial and Grounds; View: Southeast.
- 12 of 23. Exterior, Northeast Vietnam Memorial and Grounds; View: Southwest.
- 13 of 23. Exterior, Southeast Grounds; View: Northwest.
- 14 of 23. Exterior, Southwest Grounds; View: Northeast.
- 15 of 23. Exterior, West; View: East, Detail, Cupola.
- 16 of 23. Interior, 1908 Courtroom; from Balcony; View: South.
- 17 of 23. Interior, 1908 Courtroom; Judges Bench; View: South.
- 18 of 23. Interior, 1908 Courtroom; Spectator Seating; View: North.
- 19 of 23. Interior, 1908 Courtroom; Balcony Seating and Clerestory Windows; View: West.
- 20 of 23. Interior, 1964 Courtroom; View: East.
- 21 of 23. Interior, 1964 Hall and Doorways leading to Doors of the 1908 Courtroom; View: Northeast.
- 22 of 23. Interior, 1908 Millwork in Cross-hall Section showing Sheriffs Counter and Portrait of Peter Horry; View: Northeast.
- 23 of 23 Interior, 1938 Addition Hallway and Rear Doors; View: South.

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- Figure 3. Primary facade (north), 1920, *The Independent Republic Quarterly*, Oct 1970.
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- Figure 5. "Court House Bid Awarded." *The Horry Herald*, September 26, 1963. Architects Drawing of Court House.
- Figure 6. Aerial of Conway, 1948 Collection of Surveyor Aerials donated by Sylvia Cox Redic, Courtesy of Horry County Museum.
- Figure 7. Photograph of blueprint display of the first floor layout of the 1908 Courthouse. Courtesy of Moseley Architects.

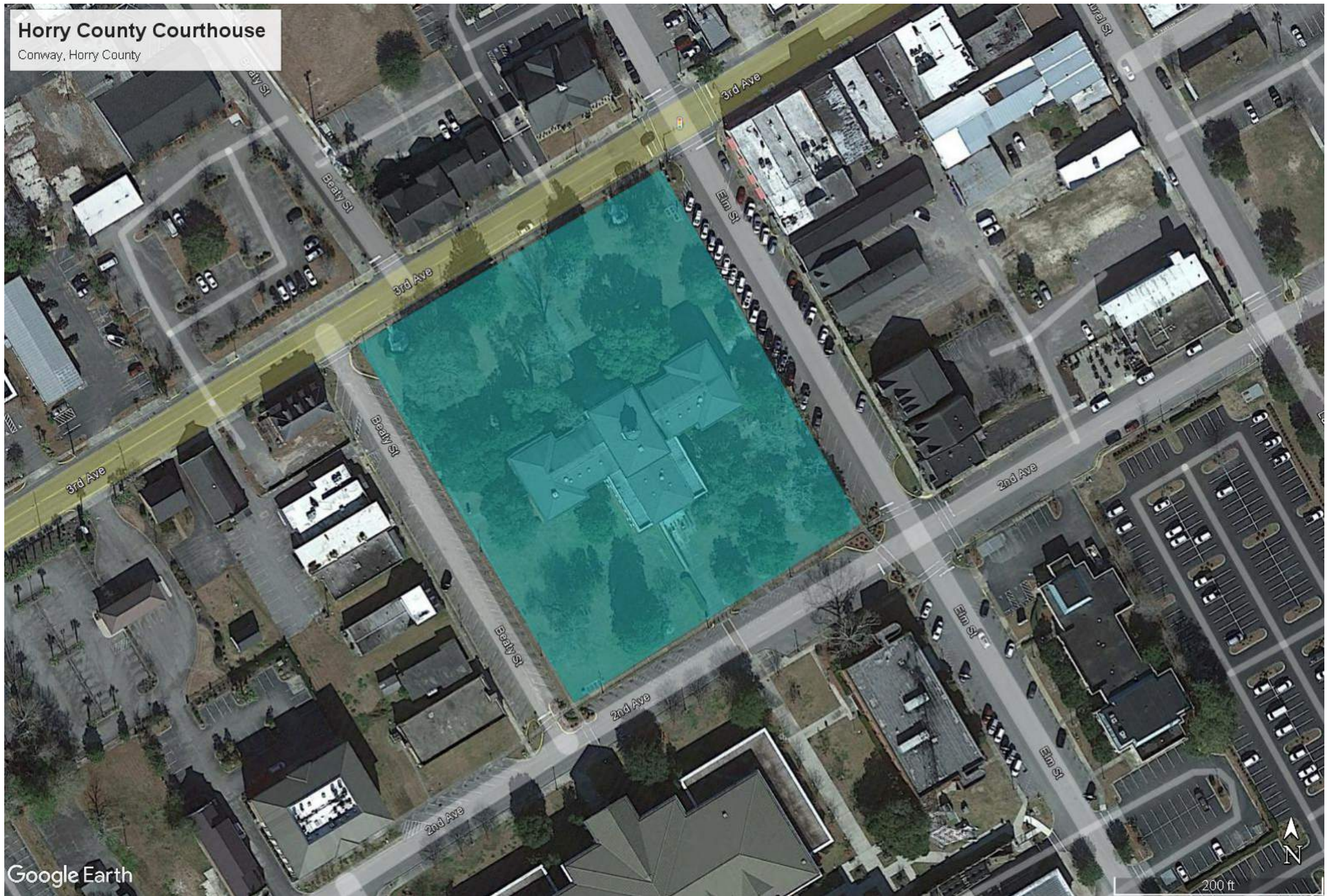
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Horry County Courthouse

Conway, Horry County



Horry County Courthouse

Conway, Horry County



Google Earth

2000 ft

Horry County Courthouse

Conway, Horry County

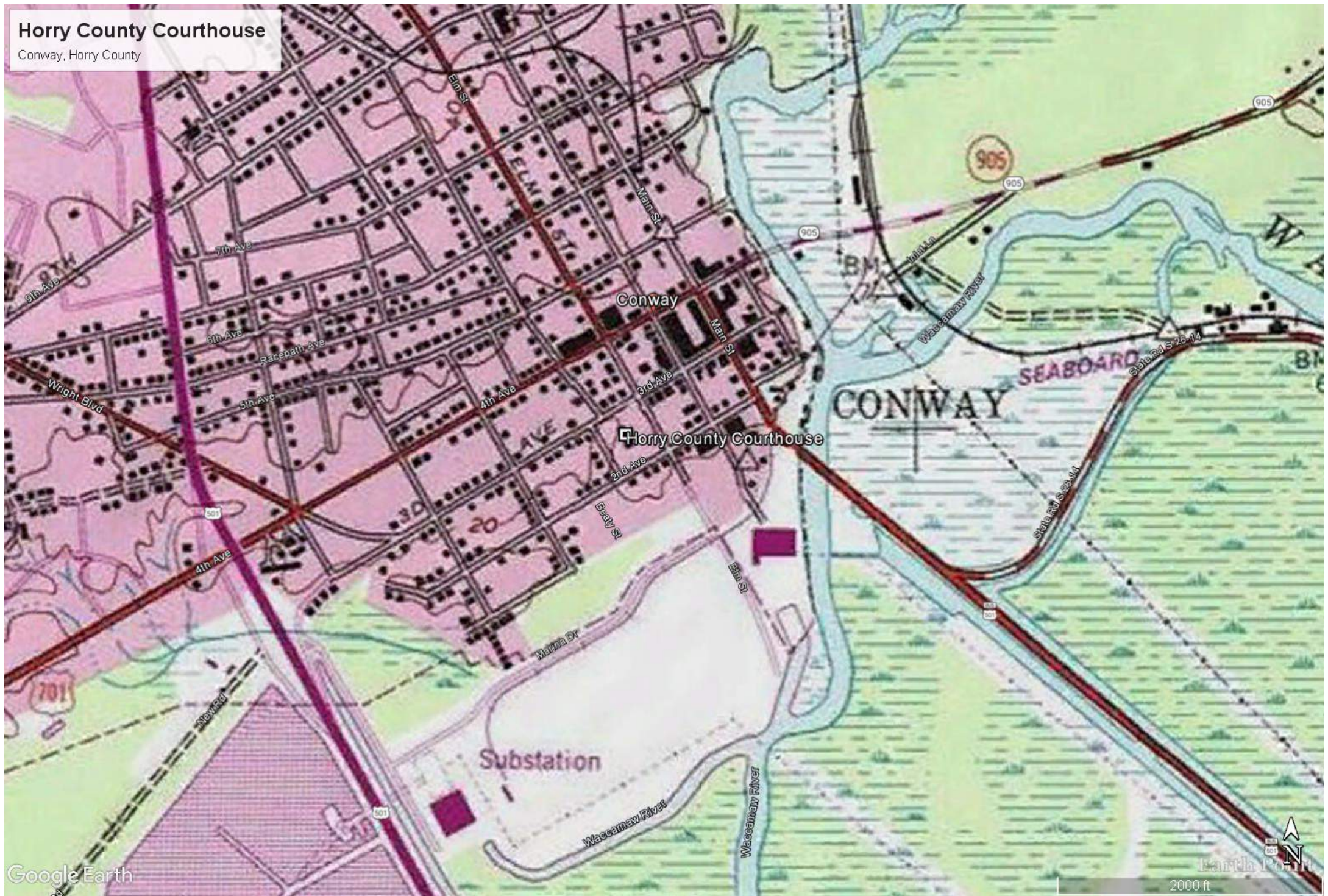
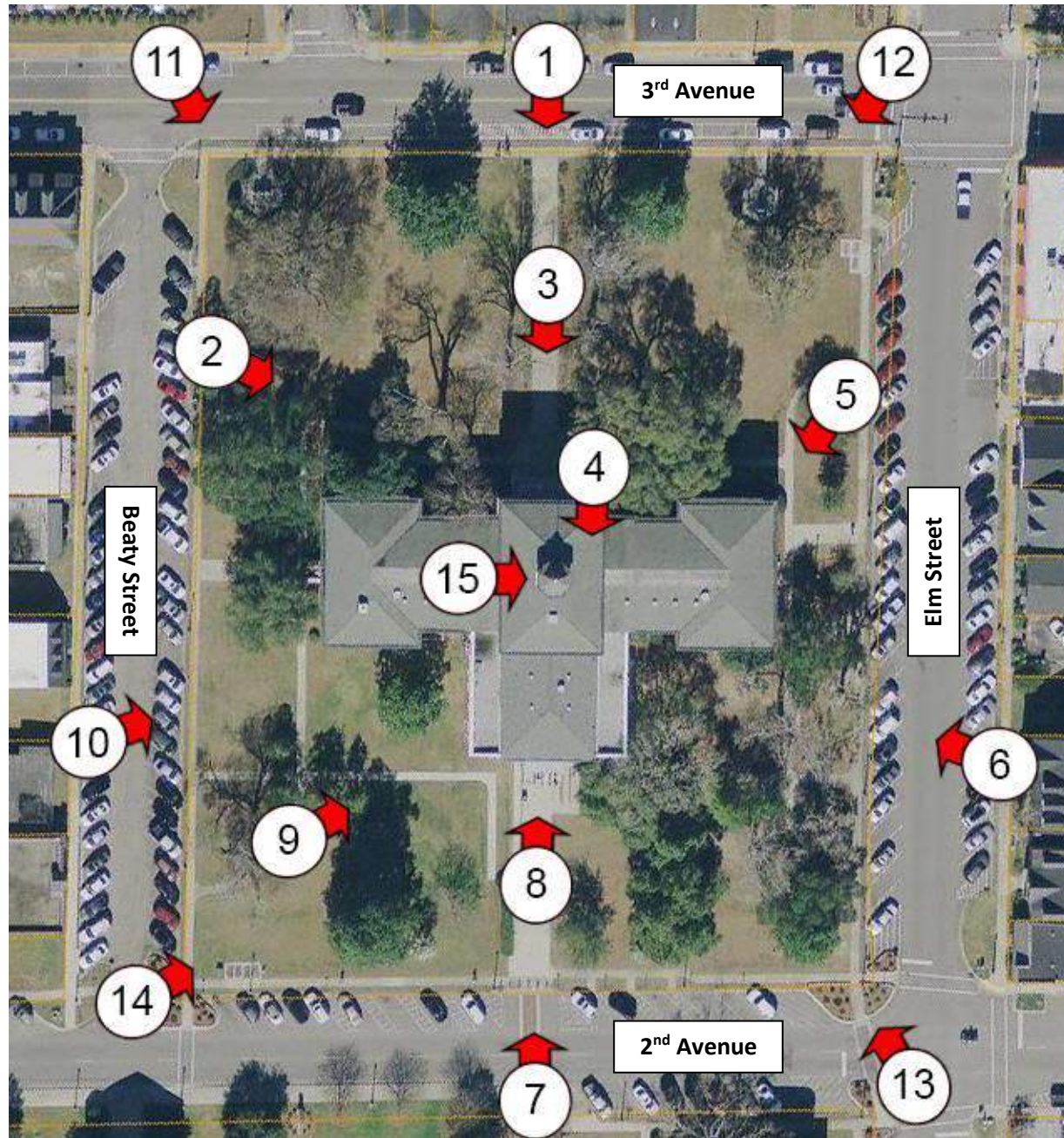
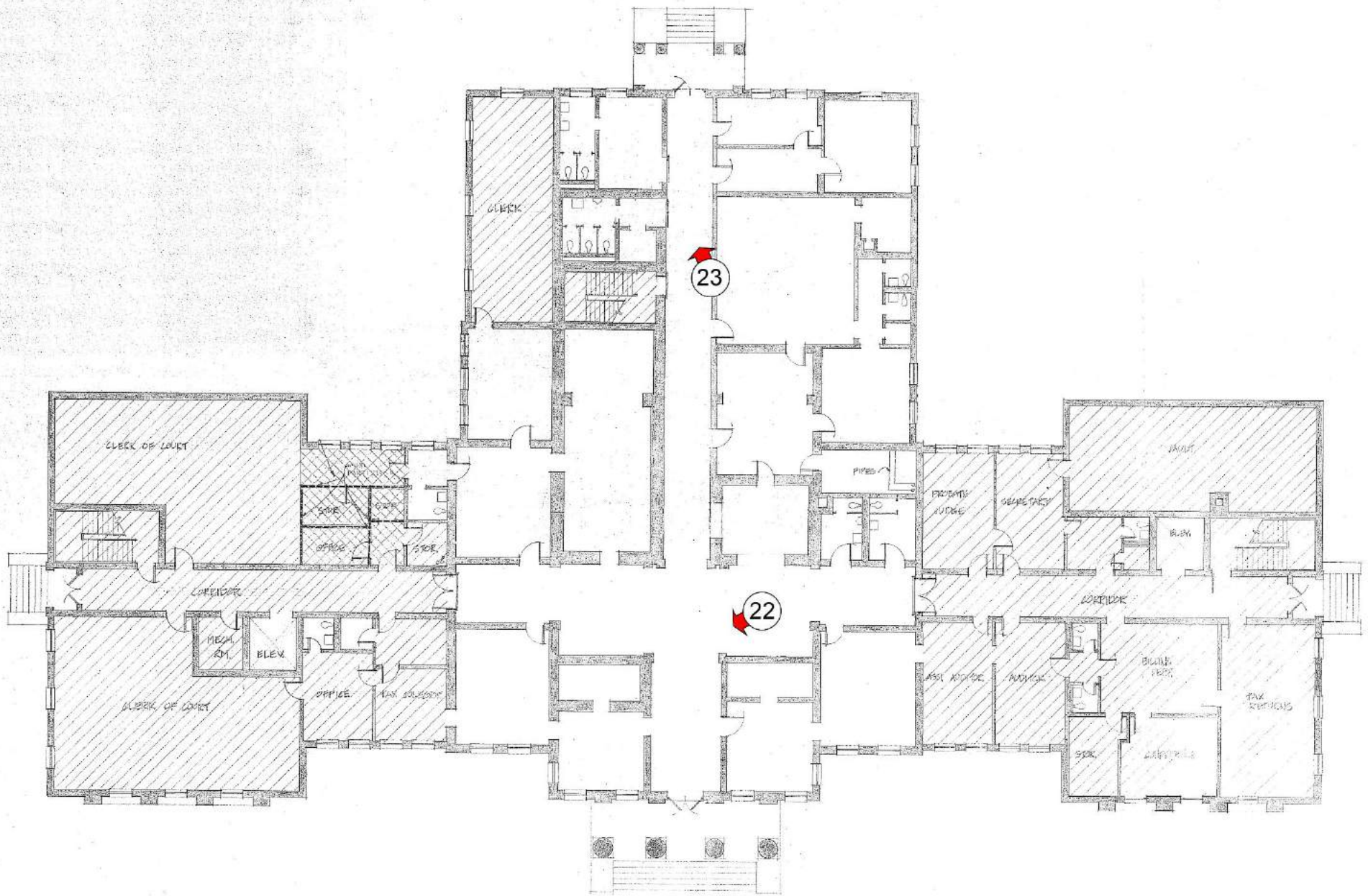
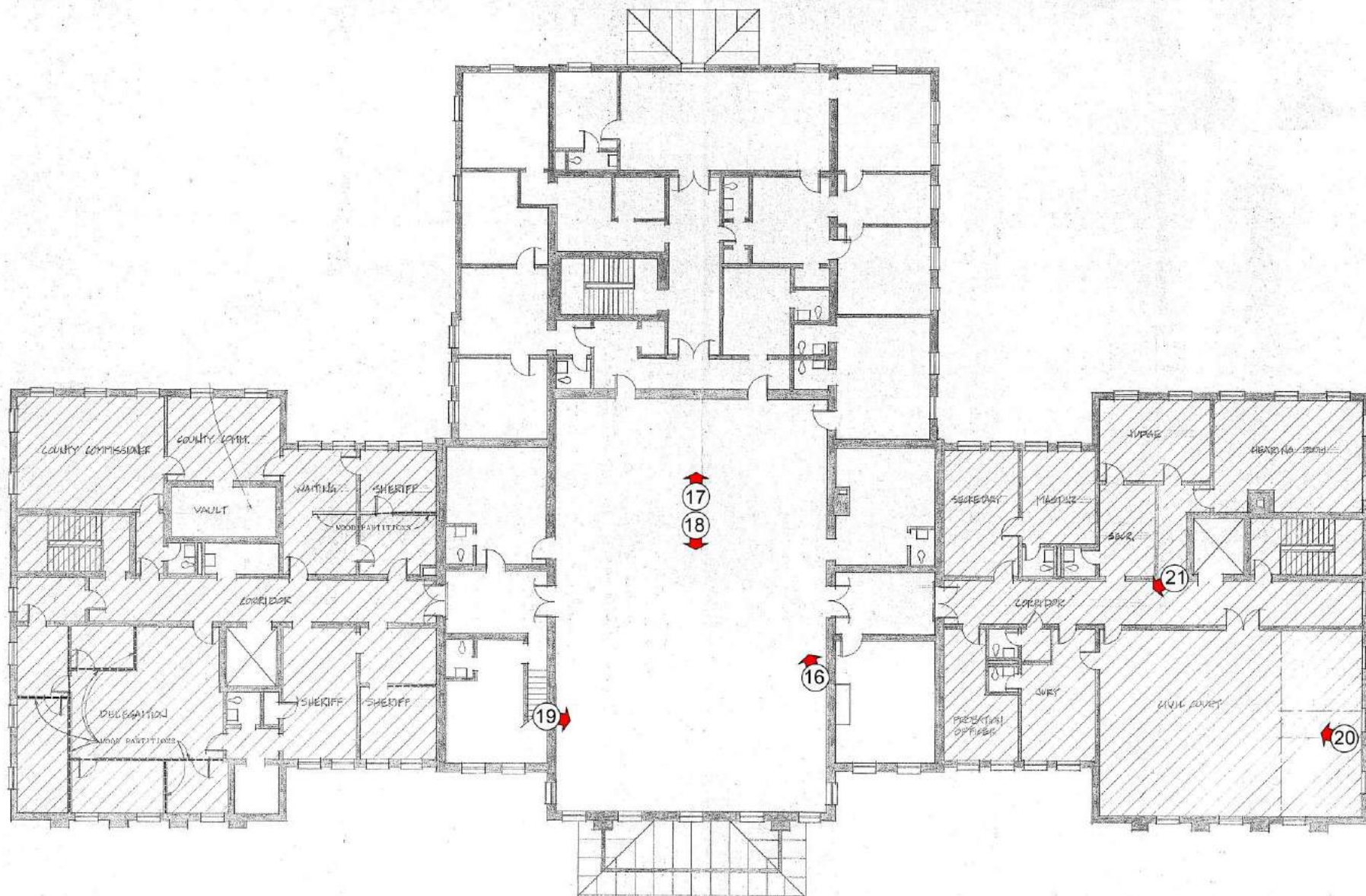


Photo Key





FIRST FLOOR PLAN
 SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



SECOND FLOOR PLAN
 SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"











































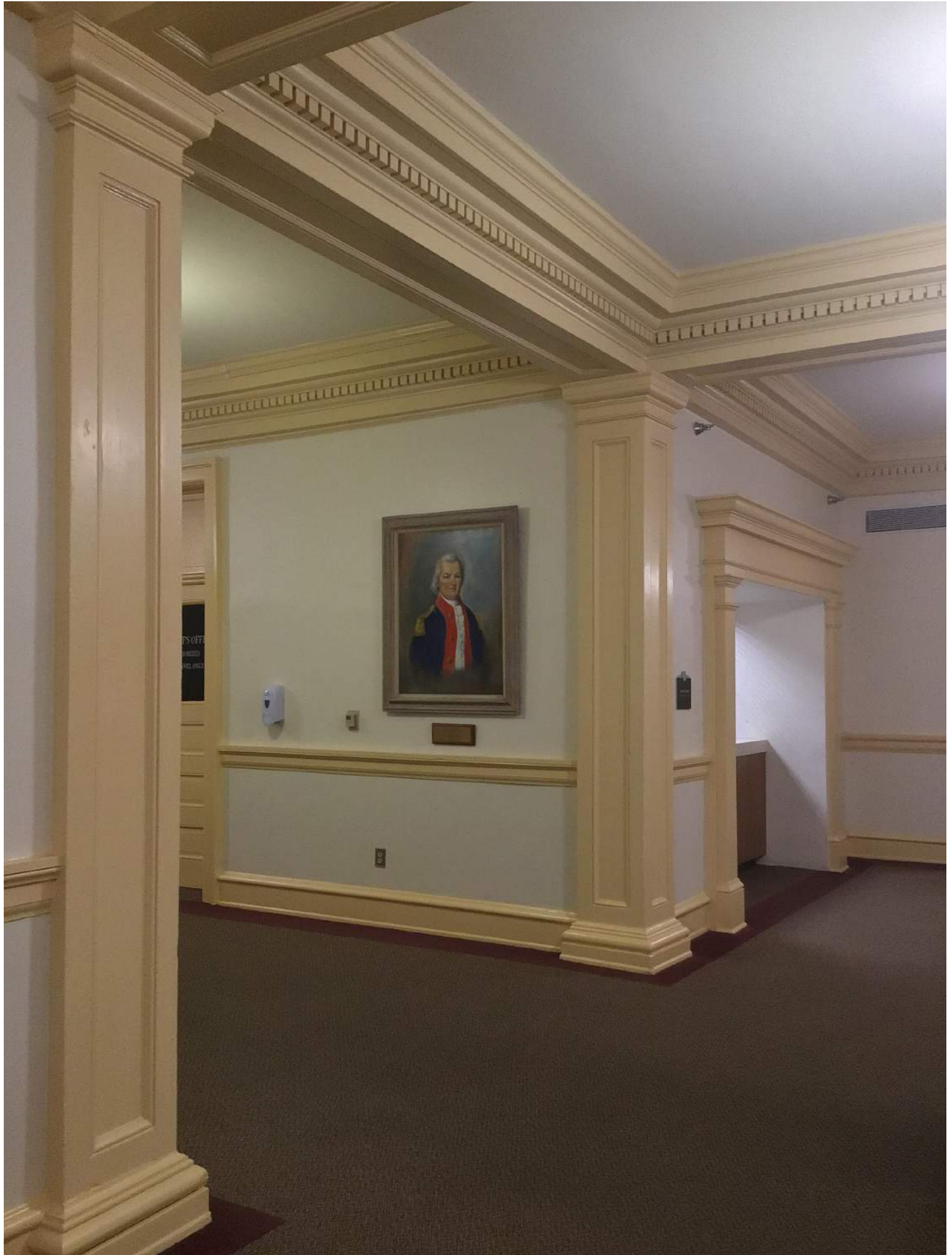




Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

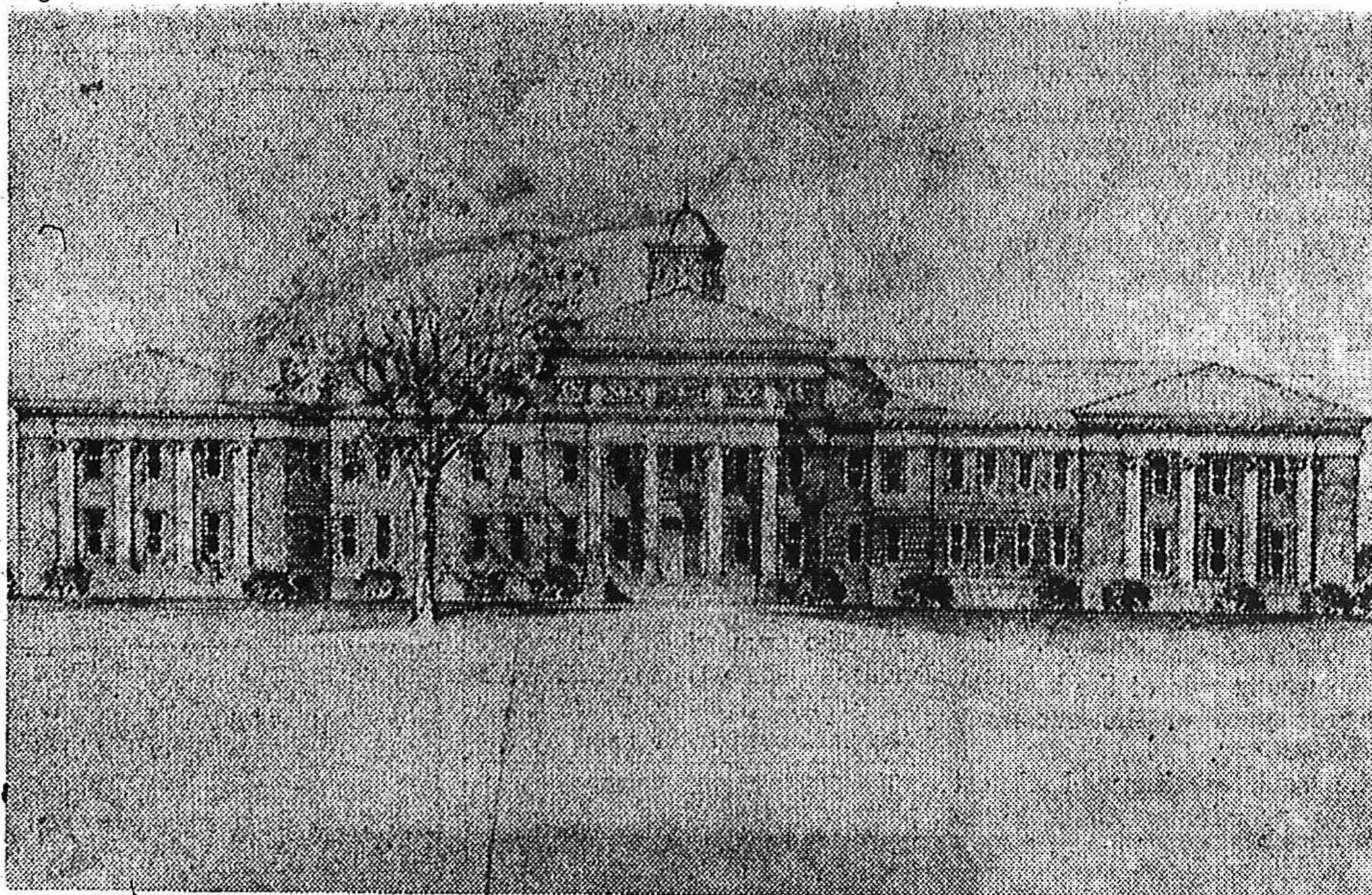


Horry County Courthouse 1920

Fig. 4



Fig. 5



ARCHITECT'S DRAWING OF COURT HOUSE

Fig. 6



Fig. 7

